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Letter dated 18 March 2015 from the Permanent Representative of Uzbekistan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to convey to you the attached information on the declaration of 2015 as the Year of Attention and Care for the Older Generation in the Republic of Uzbekistan (see annex).

I would appreciate it if you could circulate the present letter and its annex as a document of the sixty-ninth session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 68, "Promotion and protection of human rights".

(*Signed*) Muzaffar **Madrakhimov**

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Annex to the letter dated 18 March 2015 from the Permanent Representative of Uzbekistan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

[Original: Russian]

Declaration of 2015 as the Year of Attention and Care for the Older Generation in Uzbekistan

At the initiative of President Islam Karimov, the year 2015 has been declared the Year of Attention and Care for the Older Generation in the Republic of Uzbekistan. This measure is based on the age-old values of our people, and its purpose is to express due respect and provide comprehensive support to people of advanced age, in keeping with the aspirations and desires of our society. At a ceremony to mark the twenty-second anniversary of the Constitution of Uzbekistan, the President emphasized that attention and genuine concern for the elderly are among the primary determinants of a society's level of cultural development.

Respect, veneration and concern for members of the older generation are indicators of a society's morals and its degree of sophistication. Since antiquity, these lofty moral qualities have been characteristic of the Uzbek people, and they have been a national policy priority of Uzbekistan since the early days of independence.

The Uzbek model of development, based on the five principles of reform and economic renewal developed by President Karimov, has set the course for the transformation of our country for many years to come. Establishing a system of social protection based on a firm legal foundation is a main priority. The human being and his or her life and dreams, hopes and concerns are the central focus.

The Presidential Decree of 19 March 2007 on measures to further enhance and strengthen the social protection system, the Decision of the Head of State of 30 May 2011 on additional measures to further strengthen social protection for single elderly people, pensioners and persons with disabilities for the period from 2011 to 2015 as well as other laws and regulations contain clear benchmarks and specific social protection goals. These instruments serve as a unique road map to ensure the welfare and increased well-being of citizens of retirement age, veterans of the Second World War and veterans of labour.

Steady improvements in the social sphere serve as clear indication of the thoroughgoing work that has been done in Uzbekistan to provide for the social protection of the people. Dynamic and balanced economic development is the basis for progressive improvements in the standard of living and quality of life.

In this connection, in order to provide comprehensive support for the elderly, more than 11,618 billion sum were allocated from the national budget for pension payments last year alone, as well as more than 105 billion sum for benefits. Those who participated in the war or laboured on the home front receive assistance each year in the form of free medical care, treatments at sanatoria and health resorts, and other necessary support.

The elderly also receive material and moral support from non-governmental and community organizations. The scale of this support is steadily increasing. In

2014, for example, the Council of the Federation of Trade Unions, Uzpharmsanoat (a government corporation), the Dori-Darmon corporation, the Nuronii and Makhalla Foundations, the Kamolot youth organization and others were actively involved in work to improve quality of life for the elderly. With their assistance, war veterans and veterans of labour visited Samarqand, Bukhoro, Khiva, Termez, Tashkent and other cities in Uzbekistan, received outpatient and inpatient care and underwent sanatoria rest cures.

Thus, all possible efforts are being made to provide the elderly with decent lives, for it is they who have made a major contribution to ensuring peace and tranquillity and strengthening the economic potential of our Homeland, economic potential that serves as the basis for its current well-being.

This year, activity to develop the social sphere and ensure targeted social assistance to single elderly people, pensioners, persons with disabilities and needy families is continuing to increase in scope. The Decree of the Head of State of 13 October 2014 on measures to further strengthen social support for war and labour veterans who served during the period 1941 to 1945 and the declaration of 2015 as the Year of Attention and Care for the Older Generation in Uzbekistan have provided impetus for the new social initiatives.

The national programme for the Year of Attention and Care for the Older Generation, adopted under the Presidential Decision of 18 February 2015, will shape the implementation of these benevolent actions. The programme aims to further raise the standard of living and quality of life for the elderly, increase the scale of material and moral support, enhance social, pension and medical services for the elderly, particularly for war and labour veterans who served during the period from 1941 to 1945, and expand the role of the elderly in raising up young people in the spirit of values and traditions of our people that stretch back for centuries.

The national programme for the Year of Attention and Care for the Older Generation, which consists of six parts, provides for further improvements to the legislative and regulatory framework designed to strengthen focus on and care for the elderly. Documents that have been drafted serve as the basis for plans to enhance the pension and social support systems and establish a more convenient system for the provision of government services to the elderly, including for obtaining various certificates and supporting documents.

Targeted social protection and support for the elderly will be enhanced, particularly for war and labour veterans who served during the period from 1941 to 1945, and the range of social welfare services provided to the elderly will be expanded, especially for single persons of advanced age and persons with disabilities. The scale of material and moral support provided by the *makhalla*, or neighbourhood community, the Nuronii Foundation and other non-governmental and community organizations will be expanded, in order to ensure their well-being and decent living conditions.

This year, for example, everyone who participated in the war from 1941 to 1945 will receive a domestically produced television and cell phone at no cost, with 60 free minutes of local and long-distance outgoing calls each month and no monthly user charges. War and labour veterans who travel to sanatoria and rest cure establishments within the country will receive one free train trip per year and a 50 per cent reduction on air travel (round trip).

Improved medical and social services for veterans and elderly people receive particular attention in the national programme through comprehensive wellness programmes, expanded prevention activities, up-to-date treatment methods of increased scope and availability, provision of rehabilitation aids and assistive technologies for the elderly and persons with disabilities, including on a preferential basis, and improved facilities at sanatoria, rest cure establishments and community organizations specializing in serving the elderly.

Free wellness programmes for war and labour veterans who served during the period from 1941 to 1945 will be set up this year at sanatoria and rest cure establishments of the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection, the Council of the Federation of Trade Unions and other State-owned and private enterprises.

In addition, this year, the elderly will have the opportunity to attend cinemas, theatres, museums, concerts and other cultural activities free of charge. An event to honour people aged 100 or older, called Face to Face with the Century and other, similar events are being planned.

There will be improvements in work to organize daily and leisure activities for the elderly, with a particular focus on establishing activity- and interest-based groups in the communities and *makhallat*, as well as facilities for the elderly to engage in exercise and sports activities. There will be a *chaikhana*, or tearoom, in every *makhalla*, which will serve as a social centre for the elderly. People traditionally gather at the *chaikhana* to socialize, chat, share the latest news over a cup of tea, and play chess and checkers. Now they will be able to gather there to watch special television broadcasts, performances and movies, whose production this year will be increased.

Departments responsible for ongoing work with the elderly and persons with disabilities within the *makhallat* and citizens' self-government bodies will be strengthened, through coordination and oversight of government agencies and offices, with emphasis on those offices that provide for pensions and social and medical services.

Events are being planned to provide elderly people who are alone and those in need of social support with the furniture and housewares they need, as well as clothing, reading matter and tabletop and board games. This programme is called May the Elderly Give Us Their Blessing.

Under the motto "No one overlooked", tourist trips to historic sites will be organized for elderly people from all over the country and a series of displays and competitions called the Elderly are the Pillar of the Family and Best *Makhalla Guzar* (neighbourhood community centre) will be held in various locales.

The national programme of the Year of Attention and Care for the Older Generation provides for the allocation of a total of 2,246.5 billion sum and 229.6 million dollars to carry out all of this fine work.

All veterans enjoy love, attention and generosity, respect and veneration beyond measure. The Presidential Decree of 19 February 2015 on awarding jubilee medals to Uzbek war and labour veterans who served during the period 1941 to 1945 in order to commemorate the seventieth anniversary of the Second World War Victory is a clear demonstration of the care and attention lavished on the older generation. The Decree was adopted to pay due tribute to war and labour veterans

who served during the period 1941 to 1945, making an invaluable contribution to the Victory over fascism.

To recall magnificent deeds and to be capable of appreciating people themselves is one of life's enduring values. After all, the power of a nation arises less from the strength of its military than from the peace and tranquillity that hold sway there, and from its citizens' cohesiveness, unity and patriotism, as manifested in the attention and care shown to the elderly. The human being and his or her rights and interests thus represent the highest value of our Homeland.

The measures taken in our country to brighten the lives of the elderly are not only a source of material support for them but of emotional and psychological support as well. The peaceful and serene lives of our citizens, their confidence in the future and their work to educate the younger generation in a spirit of fidelity to the Homeland and ideas of independence reflect their profound satisfaction and gratitude for the attention and care they receive.